

success for students and her coworkers. We are blessed to have had such a caring teacher as Ms. Lewis. I commend her for her service as well as her good work and wish her continued success in future endeavors.

I ask my colleagues today to join with me in honoring Ms. Lewis, a wonderful teacher who has always and will be dedicated to the students of the Third District of Arkansas.

HEALTH CARE CHOICE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. GRIJALVA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GRIJALVA. Private health insurance companies have two-thirds of all Americans that have insurance enrolled in their plans, and they pay one-third of the overall costs for health care in this country. Two-thirds of that cost is borne by the American taxpayer and the working middle class of this country.

You will hear in the next few days a lot of harping about the cost of health care reform for this Nation. I think the only way—and I believe sincerely—to reduce health care costs, bring private insurance companies under control by having a competitive plan, is to have a public option.

A public option does not deny people health care because of preexisting conditions—a public option in the free marketplace that competes with private insurance, and a public option that extends health benefits and opportunities to all Americans.

If we are going to do health reform right, we must provide competition for public insurance, and we must provide opportunity and choice for the American people.

THE WOMEN'S FUND OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The Women's Fund of Miami-Dade County is a catalyst for social change and economic justice, assisting women to reach their full potential. Together with the Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy at Florida International University, the Women's Fund published a report entitled: Portrait of Women's Economic Security in Greater Miami, which reflects the dire economic situation facing women.

More than half of working women do not earn adequate income to cover their most basic necessities. Eighty-six percent of single mothers do not have enough income to be self-sufficient. Nearly 20 percent of women who work are underemployed. And only one-fourth of women have a retirement or pension plan.

The numbers in these categories are even lower than the national average

but reflect the problem of women across the country.

Here in Congress I work to empower women to be self-sufficient and support policies that enhance women's economic security, including legislation to provide paid parental leave to Federal employees.

I will continue to work for south Florida women by promoting initiatives that protect the rights of women across the Nation.

HEALTH CARE CRISIS ALSO AN ECONOMIC CRISIS

(Mr. DRIEHAUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DRIEHAUS. Mr. Speaker, until we fix health care in this country, families and small businesses will bear a heavier and heavier financial burden that will slow economic recovery and stifle growth and investment.

In Ohio, health care costs for small businesses have grown 30 percent in recent years. Employer coverage across the State has declined, so that now less than half of all small businesses offer health care coverage benefits to their employees.

The average Ohio family that does receive health care coverage from their employer pays nearly \$13,000 in premiums every year. And because more than 1 in 10 Ohioans lives without any health insurance, Ohio's economy loses between \$3.5 billion and \$7 billion every year due to lost productivity.

The health care crisis is an economic crisis, and part of fixing our economy is ensuring that every single American has quality, affordable health care. The status quo is no longer tolerable for Ohio and no longer tolerable for America.

AMERICANS DESERVE A BETTER SOLUTION

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, the trillion-dollar stimulus bill produced by the Obama administration and congressional Democrats is not working. Unemployment is nearing double digits—and rising. Americans are hurting as they struggle to find work and pay the bills. So, what's next?

Despite all the broken promises, now the liberals want to meddle with the health care system and spend another trillion dollars. For their plan to work, Democrats are proposing tax hikes on everything from small businesses to the elimination of the tax deduction for charitable contributions to tax hikes on your favorite soft drink at the convenience store.

Americans deserve a better solution. House Republicans have a plan that won't bankrupt us or increase private insurance rates. In fact, the Republican plan will reduce health care costs, expand access, increase the quality of

care for Americans. Most importantly, the plan ensures that medical decisions are made by patients and their doctors—not government bureaucrats.

The Democrat's government-run health care program is the wrong decision for America. Let's support the plan that offers Americans the freedom and choices they deserve without strangling future generations with insurmountable debt.

MEANINGFUL REFORM NEEDED

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Health Subcommittee I have been a strong supporter of meaningful health care reform, including a robust public health insurance option.

But there's a problem with the plan that's on the table because it incorporates a Medicare reimbursement system that isn't fair. And all you have to do is look at States like Iowa and Minnesota, which consistently rank in the top five in terms of quality patient outcomes and in the bottom five in Medicare reimbursement. Or look at the State of Louisiana, where we spend more per Medicare patient than any other State, and Louisiana is ranked 50th in objective patient outcome measurements.

That system is flawed. When you base the public health insurance option on Medicare plus 5 percent, you perpetuate an inefficient system.

Medical economists will tell you the most effective way to take this head on is to address the problem of over-utilization in geographic parts of the country which waste money and result in poor patient outcomes.

Unless we incorporate those incentives into this public option and address this problem with Medicare, we will never have meaningful reform.

STIMULUS BILL NOT WORKING

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Will Rogers once said: The opposite of progress is Congress. Watching the debate on the floor today, I start to get a better idea about what he meant.

At a time when our country is facing the worst recession in a quarter of a century, the Democrat majority here in Congress just got done passing a national energy tax that will raise the cost of utilities for every American household. And now they're down here on the floor talking about raising taxes for a government takeover of health insurance. All the while, millions of Americans are out of work, hundreds of thousands of Americans continue to lose their jobs every month.

Now, when this trillion-dollar stimulus bill was passed in February, we

were told that it would create jobs immediately. It would hold unemployment below 8 percent. Well, unemployment is now 9.5 percent. It's the worst in 26 years.

Almost 2 million people have lost their jobs since the so-called stimulus bill passed. And yet, the President just said, It's done its job. This weekend, he said the stimulus was "working exactly as we anticipated."

With all due respect to the President of the United States and my Democrat colleagues, the stimulus bill is not working. And the American people know it. The American people deserve a recovery plan that will create real jobs and real recovery—and that's fiscal discipline in Washington, D.C., and tax relief for working families, small businesses, and family farms.

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HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. HIMES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, the cost and inefficiency of our health care system is embarrassing. It is the only word. American families pay \$1,100 extra every year through their health insurance premiums to fund care for the patients who are unable to pay their hospital bills. The U.S. meanwhile ranks 42nd in the world in life expectancy, and the overuse of invasive medical procedures is dangerous to many. Unexpected health care expenses is the leading cause of bankruptcy amongst American families.

The system is bankrupting the Government of the United States, of Connecticut and of the other 49 States. We have got to get this reform right. It is critical to American families, to fiscal prudence, and to the future of this country. It won't be easy, but inaction is simply not an option.

CREDIT CARD CONGRESS

(Mr. CHAFFETZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with grave concern about this "credit card Congress." Every problem seems to come with a spending plan, and no amount of money seems to be enough.

The national deficit is our annual discrepancy between tax revenue and public expenditures. We just exceeded the \$1 trillion deficit mark for this year, and we still have a long way to go this year. Our national debt is the cumulative amount of money the American people owe; and over the course of the past Congresses, it, too, has skyrocketed.

As of June 30, the national debt stood at \$11.5 trillion. During the month of June, the national debt increased by over \$223 billion. The government spent

over \$18 billion in interest payments in just the month of June. That is \$600 million a day.

Because the Congress did not have the self-discipline to spend less than it took in, \$600 million of your money is going out the door in interest payments. We can no longer afford to run Congress on a credit card.

H.R. 2738

(Mr. TEAGUE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TEAGUE. Mr. Speaker, during the 4th of July recess, I traveled home to visit with constituents and speak with them about their problems and find ways in which we could help them.

As is often the case, my constituents continue to inspire me with their willingness to take on hard challenges and help their family and neighbors in need. Many throughout my district volunteer their time to drive veterans to medical appointments, even though the drive can last over 3 or 4 hours. It is tough, but oftentimes it is what needs to be done for a veteran needing medical services.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 2738, a bill that would direct the Secretary of the VA to reimburse family caregivers of disabled veterans for travel expenses, including lodging and food, when they take vets for appointments and treatments. Rural veterans face too many obstacles when seeking medical treatment, and I believe this legislation will make their lives a little easier and help get them the care that they need. We made a lot of promises to our veterans, and it's about time we begin to honor them.

I hope that my colleagues will support this very important piece of legislation, and I urge its passage.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

(Mr. FORTENBERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as Congress takes on the essential task of strengthening our health care system, we have an extraordinary opportunity here to do something good and right for the American people. While the challenges before us are multiple, shifting the health care paradigm from a system that treats the symptoms of sickness and disease to one that promotes life-long wellness and prevention for all Americans would be a very good and meaningful start.

The current health care debate, which focuses on a loosely defined, government-operated "public option," has yet to address several underlying complexities within our system. But the essential question here is really simple: How do we improve health outcomes and reduce costs while protecting vulnerable persons? A thorough policy de-

bate must be grounded in these cornerstone objectives to effectively improve the quality of and access to health care for all Americans, or else we are simply discussing a new government-financing mechanism without regard to unsustainable cost projections.

RECOGNIZING HARLAN AND CHARLIE STOKES

(Mr. KLINE of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the actions of two brave men from my district, Mr. Harlan Stokes and his son Charlie.

Last August, Harlan, an Eagle Scout himself, and Charlie, who was well on his way to earning his Eagle Scout rank, set out to conquer Longs Peak in the Rocky Mountain National Park. Little did they know they would need all of their scout training before the day was done.

As the two reached the top of the mountain, a powerful storm hit, bringing with it gale-force winds, rain and hail. Harlan and Charlie quickly headed down the mountain; but as they went down, they found other less prepared hikers. Bravely staying to help, they gathered those they had found and ran for shelter in a nearby cave. Over the next 2 hours, the father-son duo selflessly cared for 23 hikers while they themselves began to suffer from hypothermia.

As a result of their courageous actions, all 23 hikers made it off the mountain safely. To honor their heroism, the two were awarded one of the Boy Scouts' most prestigious awards, the National Medal of Merit.

Today we salute their bravery and honor their selflessness. Harlan and Charlie's story exemplifies the qualities of the Boy Scouts of America and represents the best that America has to offer.

GOVERNMENT INTRUSION INTO THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

(Mr. BROUN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Americans are hurting because of the high cost of health care. I am a medical doctor. We need to fix the system. It is affecting everybody. It is health care financing that is the problem. Why are health care expenses so high?

In my rural south Georgia medical practice, I had a lab. Congress passed a bill called CLIA, the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act, that shut down my lab. Prior to being shut down, if a patient came to see me with a red, sore throat and running a fever, I would do a CBC, a complete blood count, to see if they had a bacterial infection and thus needed antibiotics, or a viral infection where antibiotics are not going